

the Chairman, JCS, and Commander, Joint Forces Command. He also led the development of the Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense roadmap, and to identify joint solutions to surveillance and command and control challenges.

As the Joint Staff lead for Interagency Homeland Air Security issues, Admiral Mathis most recently worked in close cooperation with USNORTHCOM, NORAD, the Services, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Homeland Security, and the Office of Homeland Security.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to express my appreciation for his dedicated service and I wish him well in his retirement from the Navy.

TRIBUTE TO RON NEELY

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Ronald Neely. Ron passed away in January. He was a passionate and effective leader of historic preservation and community betterment in Georgetown, Colorado, an historic mining town nestled in the Clear Creek Valley along Interstate 70 just east of the Continental Divide.

Ron established a distinguished career in Georgetown on a number of projects, and was known throughout the state as a champion of preserving local history. His accomplishments were recently acknowledged through his selection as the recipient of three simultaneous awards in Colorado: the Stephen H. Hart Award from the Colorado Historical Society, the Dana Crawford Award for Excellence from Colorado Preservation, Inc., and the President's Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. No one has ever received all three awards before, which underscores his influence for enhancing community quality of life and historic appreciation, not only in Georgetown, but throughout Colorado and the nation.

Much can be said of Ron and how he affected the lives of many people. Perhaps the best synopsis comes from The Denver Post columnist Joanne Ditmer. In a column appearing in The Denver Post in late November, she wrote:

Counting our Thanksgiving blessings usually is a litany of material things, as well as family and friends who enrich our lives. But this year I'm giving thanks for the people who have vision, commitment and practical know-how to make our communities the best possible places to live.

A sterling example is Ron Neely of Georgetown, who for 35 years has had one goal: to keep that splendid old Victorian mining town as a wonderful place to live and visit. He's a historic preservationist, not just for saving beautiful old buildings, but for preserving and nurturing the unique man-built qualities that make his town one of the most attractive and healthy in the state.

I can think of no other individual who has made such an impact on the looks and spirit of this historic community. He is a visionary, hard-headed and practical, with financial savvy. All over Colorado, those with similar interests see Georgetown as the example of how to get it right, despite some really tough battles along the way.

I agree with these reflections on Ron and his work.

In 1966, Georgetown was named a National Historic Landmark District, among the first designated by Congress. Shortly thereafter, Ron founded and became executive director of Historic Georgetown Inc. (HGI) in 1970. The next year, HGI bought the 1867 Hammil House and converted it into a museum, which showcases how wealthy mine owners and others lived in the harsh environment of the west at the turn of the century. From there, Ron and others went on to purchase and protect a number of historic structures throughout the town.

In addition, Ron helped lead an effort to stop the building of a condominium complex on a mountain above the town. Following that success in 1982, Ron and HGI helped to buy the land on which the development would have occurred in order to keep it as open space. Presently, HGI has secured 2,000 acres of open space on the mountainsides towering above the town. This will not only preserve the historic feel of the area, but it also will protect some of the old mining artifacts and workings on these open spaces.

In 1995, Ron worked with HGI to purchase an old filling station right of the interstate. His vision was to turn this into a Gateway Visitors Center to create an inviting first impression for visitors to Georgetown. Together with HGI and the Colorado Department of Transportation, Ron's vision became a reality when this facility was opened in 2003. Now, the Center sees 300,000 visitors annually.

I had the pleasure of knowing and working with Ron. He continued to work steadfastly on projects and efforts to preserve, protect and enhance the Georgetown community. The town will reap the benefits of his work for years to come. I also had the chance to thank him personally at the ceremony early this year where he received the three awards.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and achievement of Ron Neely. His legacy will live on in Georgetown and in others who work to preserve our past and make our communities vibrant places to live, work, raise a family, and appreciate. I have also included a story from the Rocky Mountain News regarding his death and life's work.

[From Rocky Mountain News, Jan. 14, 2006]

NEELY HELPED CREATE HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

(By Mary Voelz Chandler)

Ronald J. Neely's passion for preservation led to the founding of Historic Georgetown, new life for numerous buildings and stature as a wellspring of information for others who battle to save historic sites.

Even a diagnosis in June of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, the progressive neuromuscular disease also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, didn't temper his love of talking about preservation battles past or present—or future.

But complications from the disease ended his life Friday morning at Lutheran Medical Center. He died at age 66 of respiratory failure.

"Ron is the epitome of a leader who takes on a community with pride and passion and takes it light-years ahead," said Dana Crawford, a preservationist and developer, as well as president of Urban Neighborhoods. "He did so much for that community and for others."

Mr. Neely moved out of Denver to work at Loveland Ski Area in the late 1960s, tired of

the city and eyeing a life on skis. Soon after, he settled in Georgetown and, with friends, in 1970 founded the preservation group that is credited with being the oldest in Colorado.

"A town like this kind of grabs you in a hurry," Mr. Neely said last year in an interview with the Rocky Mountain News.

A few weeks before, he had been honored by three preservation groups with the Colorado Historical Society's Stephen H. Hart Award, Colorado Preservation Inc.'s Dana Crawford Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's President's Award.

During the emotional program at the Oxford Hotel, Crawford looked out at the crowd and said, "I feel we all went to college together—at Ron Neely University."

The line brought laughter then; on Friday it brought agreement.

"He was one of the early preservation pioneers in the state and set the standard for the rest of us to follow in how you do it, in what grass-roots preservation is all about," said Barbara Pahl, head of the Mountains/Plains Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "He was one of the best and one of our state's treasures."

Mr. Neely and Historic Georgetown worked to preserve several buildings in that city and were in discussions about buying and restoring the town's 1874 school building.

His wife, Cynthia Neely, said Friday that effort will continue. When she told the school's owner of Mr. Neely's death, "He said, 'This will be a different place without him.' And he's right. This will be a different place without him."

Passion and determination are words that come up often in conversations about Mr. Neely.

"The loss of Ron is a tremendous loss on so many levels," said Mark Wolfe, director of the State Historical Fund. "He symbolized the determination preservation needs to be successful with sensitivity and generosity. I think that is a unique combination. He sincerely cared, not just about preservation, but the way it affected people."

Survivors include his mother, Fran Phipps, of Arvada; wife, Cynthia, of Georgetown; son, Ronald J. (Burr) Neely Jr., of Fairbanks, Alaska; sister, Cherie DeAngelis, of Arvada; stepson, Ted Wadsworth, of Boston; close friend, Christine Bradley, of Georgetown; and several nieces and nephews.

A tribute will be next week at the Hamill House in Georgetown, though the date has not been set, said Dana K. Abrahamson, executive director of Historic Georgetown Inc.

RECOGNITION OF MS. CHRISTINE TOLBERT'S EXTRAORDINARY WORK AS AN EDUCATOR

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise before you today to recognize the efforts of a truly significant person in the education field. Not only is it a privilege to represent her in the Second Congressional District of Maryland, but also to call Ms. Christine Tolbert a friend.

Ms. Tolbert breathed her passion for educating youth into the Hosanna School, known for being the first African-American school in Harford County. As years have past, the school has been adopted by the National Registry of Historic Places, serving as a museum